

The Political Ideals of Confucius and Socrates

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Abstract: There are some similarities in the thinking and concepts of politics between Confucius and Socrates. They both focused on the importance of personal character and morality to politics, and emphasized that social harmony and stability should be achieved through personal cultivation. However, they also have some differences in their political concepts and practices. Confucius paid attention to traditional values and etiquette norms, and believed that social harmony could be achieved by restoring the monarch's virtue and implementing correct etiquette. Socrates paid more attention to human reason and wisdom. In his view, personal and social changes can be achieved through philosophical thinking and self-understanding.

Keywords: Confucius, Socrates, Political ideals, Political power, Political responsibility.

The famous British philosopher Bertrand Arthur William Russell once said in his classic book "History of Western Philosophy" that philosophers are the result of the social environment and political system of their times, and they (if they are lucky) may also shape subsequent eras. Reasons for belief in political systems. Confucius and Socrates are obviously "lucky ones" in the history of human civilization, and their philosophical thoughts deeply influenced the world's political system for more than two thousand years.

Confucius was born in a noble family and actively participated in politics. He always tried to "change the world with his way". He advocated "learning and excellence will lead to officialdom". However, on the one hand, he was self-sufficient and ashamed to associate with villains. On the other hand, he wanted to display his ambition and turn things around. , in the relationship with politics, there is a so-called

conflict between seeking and avoiding in psychology. Not only do they want to show their ambitions and ask for orders for the people, but they are also afraid of the ups and downs of the officialdom and can't help themselves, because the rules of the officialdom game are actually too contrary to Confucian principles. If you are not careful, your reputation will be ruined. Socrates himself was born a commoner, followed the oracles, and basically did not get involved in political affairs, because he knew very well that those who are politically honest often do not live long. Therefore, he acted as a bystander critic, conducted research away from the incident, represented the conscience of society, and boldly shouted out the voice of justice. But Socrates was also a resolute law-abiding person. Even if the legal judgment was inconsistent with his inner moral judgment, he would rather sacrifice his life to abide by the law. In short, neither of them was accepted by the social and political environment at that time when they were alive, but what they did not expect was that their philosophical thoughts would have a profound impact on later world politics.

"The world is for the public" and "Great Together" are the political ideals and social concepts of Confucius' philosophy. From the chapter "Li Ji" ("Book of Etiquette" or "Book of Propriety"), Here Confucius describes an ideal society where the "Great Way" operates: When the Great Way is practiced, the world is for the public. Those with virtue and those with ability are chosen and used. People value trustworthiness and cultivate harmony with each other. Thus people do not treat only their parents like parents, nor do people treat only their sons like sons. That makes the aged have the appropriate last years, those in their prime have the appropriate employment, and the young have the appropriate growth and development. Elderly men with no spouses, widows, orphans, elderly people without children or grandchildren, the handicapped, the ill—all are provided for. Males have their station; females, their places to belong to. Money is thrown on the ground and thus despised; it is not necessary to store money on one's body. Labor is despised if it does not come from oneself, and it does not have to be on behalf of oneself. Therefore people don't engage in intrigue or trickery, nor do they engage in robbery, theft, and rebellion.

Thus, though people leave their houses they don't close their doors. This is called the "Great Together".

In Socrates' view, the city-state built according to his vision should be perfect and beautiful. It has four main characteristics, namely intelligence, courage and perseverance, wisdom and restraint, fairness and justice. Socrates believed that the origin of the city-state was that everyone was unable to be self-sufficient, so more people needed to live together, exchange and help each other, and conduct social division of labor and trade in exchange for health, food, shelter, clothing, and other things. Enable people to live healthily in peace and tranquility. The ancient Greek philosopher Plato talked about Socrates' political ideals in his work "Res Publica". Plato (through Socrates) considered the nature of the existing political system and constructed a model of an ideal city. The city's judicial theory is perfect. This ideal government model is an aristocratic government that relies on virtue and is based on knowledge and truth. If the ideal aristocracy degenerates and honor replaces knowledge and virtue, it will form a lord's government; if the honor of the lord's government is replaced by wealth, it will form an oligarchy; an oligarchy will transform into a democracy, and then transform into a tyranny. Ideal government and real government can be divided into monarchy, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy and republic according to the number of rulers. In addition, Plato (through Socrates) proposed a "mixed government", which he believed was the best and most stable government, combining the wisdom and virtue (virtue) of monarchy and aristocracy, as well as stability, peace and order. Equality and freedom in civilian government, democracy and republic.

On political power and political responsibility, Confucius and Socrates had different ideas. Confucius emphasized the importance of the monarch's virtue and moral cultivation in governing the country. Confucius believed that a monarch should have noble moral character and a benevolent attitude, and influence and rule the people through his own example. He advocated that the monarch should govern the country with benevolence and achieve social harmony and stability through virtue

and moral education. Through descriptions of Socrates in the writings of Plato and Plato's student Aristotle, Socrates was somewhat skeptical of political rights. He believed that political rights often lead to abuse of power and unfair behavior. A true wise man should get rid of the shackles of selfish interests and desires and treat others in a moral and fair manner. He advocated the pursuit of justice through philosophical thinking and moral practice, and believed that this was more important than achieving it through political power. Confucius emphasized the importance of the political responsibility of superior men (gentlemen) to the country and the people, while Socrates seemed to claim that superior men (philosophers) had no political responsibility to the country. However, in "The Analects", Confucius pointed out that a gentleman should not enter a chaotic state, so that he would not be able to fulfill his responsibility to save the chaotic state. Socrates instead stayed in a chaotic state and accepted the latter's treatment of him. The unfair verdict seems to be an attempt to fulfill one's political responsibility for the chaos. On the surface, both people contradict themselves, but the reason is that their starting points are different. Confucius' starting point is: In Confucius's times, when the state tends to be smaller, the superior man's example might be followed by other people, leaving the state not populated and, in its extreme, destroyed. Moreover, this process can be strengthened by the superior man's effort to build a better state elsewhere, attracting people over there and thus either shaming the ruler of a chaotic state into doing the right thing or destroying this state. After all, Confucius made the suggestion that the best way to conquer another state is not to attack it, but to build one's own state and attract other people and states to come to its leadership. Socrates' starting point is: Athens (minus the period of the rule by the Thirty) was a democratic state, where a citizen didn't have to compromise his moral principle to obtain some influence as much as a person in a non-democratic state had to. Socrates might have held a not-so-charitable view of Athens, implicitly comparing it with a stormy place. Socrates held a relatively critical attitude towards political power. Socrates believed that true wise men and philosophers should pursue truth and justice, and that political power is often a tool of

violence and deception. He is skeptical of the political system and believes that politicians often lack real wisdom and morality and are unable to achieve real justice. Socrates paid more attention to personal moral cultivation and speculation, and believed that only through personal thinking and self-knowledge can true justice be achieved.

Although there are some differences in the political conceptions of Confucius and Socrates, they both emphasize the close connection between politics and morality, justice, justice and people's happiness. These ideas still have important enlightenment and reference significance for us to understand and explore the nature of politics. By studying and thinking about these political concepts, we can better reflect on modern political practices and provide useful references for building a more just and happier political order.

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